



# ICN Insider

Iowa Communications Network  
November/December 2014 Newsletter

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## New ICN Executive Director

On September 4, the members of the ITTC were pleased to announce the appointment of Ric Lombard to serve as ICN's Executive Director. The Commission feels strongly that Ric's background, experience, and vision will position the ICN for continued success in the years to come.

[Read Ric's Bio](#)

## ICN Contracts with Iowa Based Company for Network Managed Services

ICN recently selected Fiberutilities Group; an Iowa based company, to provide technical staff for the operation and services of the ICN, including management systems, on-site technicians to staff ICN's Network Operations Center located in Johnston, IA, and field support staff located around the state. Fiberutilities Group's contract will begin on January 1, 2015.

In May, ICN received four proposals submitted in response to the Network Managed Services Request for Proposal (RFP) released by the ICN in February of this year. Between May through August, ICN's evaluation group, consisting of its management team, reviewed the proposals received and submitted a consensus regarding the evaluations and the final recommendation to award the contract to Fiberutilities Group to Ric Lombard, ICN's Executive Director. The contract was officially signed on October 2, 2014.

The following summarizes the justifications of the evaluation group in selecting Fiberutilities Group:

- The proposal was the most complete and thorough response received.
- The proposal is predicated on the development of a true partnership between Fiberutilities Group and the ICN, rather than a typical customer/vendor relationship.
- If opportunities exist to reduce costs and find efficiencies within the Network, Fiberutilities Group's proposal allows for that cost savings to be passed on to the ICN.

"The team at Fiberutilities Group is pleased to have the opportunity to, once again, work with the ICN. We have worked with the ICN on several successful, long term projects in the past and, based on that experience, we are confident that the new partnership will be beneficial to both organizations," said Rob Smith, Fiberutilities Group's Network Services President.

Lombard explained that the ICN has valued and surrounded itself with strong public/private partnerships; it has been a major part of our strength as a carrier. Lombard added, "This next season of growth will push that value even further and require even more partnership strength."

Windstream is ICN's current network services provider. There are no further renewal periods available in the Windstream and ICN contract, which was set to expire on December 31, 2014, and necessitated the release of the RFP.

On January 1, 2015, ICN users will see no change in service, ICN anticipates a seamless transition from Windstream to Fiberutilities Group.



Iowa Communications Network | Grimes State Office Building  
400 East 14th Street | Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone: 515-725-4692 | Toll Free: 877-426-4692

Visit us on the web at [www.icn.iowa.gov](http://www.icn.iowa.gov)

## Phasing out MPEG Video by 2018

For over 20 years, ICN users have relied on the ICN's full-motion MPEG2 videoconferencing service to enable their distance learning, telemedicine, training, and administrative applications. This service has been an integral part of our customer's daily operations to deliver their programs, content, and services. MPEG videoconferencing has generated well over 4 million hours of usage over the last two decades.

As with any technology, advancements are made to improve the efficiency, lower costs, and make it easier for people to use. Videoconferencing is no different. Advancements in IP videoconferencing services and applications allow for mobility, space flexibility, lower operational costs, and simpler and easy-to-use interfaces. With these advancements in mind, the ICN is announcing the MPEG videoconferencing service will be end-of-life on June 30, 2018.

After this date, MPEG2 videoconferencing will no longer be offered or supported by the ICN. The ICN currently offers our

Video@Lightspeed IP videoconference service as a bridge and replacement for the MPEG2 platform. In addition, the ICN offers additional communication tools to enable our user's content, programs, and meetings such as Unified Communications, voice conferencing services, and high-speed Internet to empower our customer's own applications.

Although over three years away, the MPEG2 videoconference service end-of-life date is announced now to help facilitate our customer's planning to move to IP videoconferencing. ICN's Account Consultants can assist users in explaining transition options and work at planning changes as it relates to budgeting and operational issues. The ICN will bring our extensive experience in videoconferencing, Internet, and telecommunications to help our customers meet their communication needs now and into the future.

Find out more about ICN's Video@Lightspeed service at [www.icn.iowa.gov/services/video](http://www.icn.iowa.gov/services/video). For questions regarding the MPEG2 sunset date please contact your account consultant or Phil Groner at [phil.groner@iowa.gov](mailto:phil.groner@iowa.gov) or 515-725-4761.

## ICN Attends National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD) Conference

The State of Iowa is a member of the National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD), and has been an active participant for many years. The Annual Conference & Technology Showcase was held August 24-28, and ICN had the opportunity to send Vicki Wallis, ICN's Strategic Project Manager. The focus of the Annual Conference is broad in nature; addressing issues that many states are confronting and sharing experiences with various technologies and initiatives that are common among states.

This year many of the topics that were of interest to states currently involve national initiatives. NASTD provided some great speakers on these topics to aid states in understanding the goals of the programs and updates. Keynote speaker Jonathan Chambers, Chief of FCC's Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis, provided great insight into the background and goals of the Rural Broadband Experiment. He hammered home the point that ubiquitous broadband service can really level the playing field for opportunities. He reported 10-20% of U.S. libraries don't have a fiber connection.

Brian Hobson of FirstNet discussed the progress on that national initiative as a member of the FirstNet panel. The goal of FirstNet is to provide a single network that will allow first responders to communicate among themselves. States are in various stages of this project. This panel discussion was particularly beneficial since Iowa is in the beginning stages of our FirstNet discussions and is also dealing with how best to provide equivalent service to rural areas.

NASTD also had Anne Neville, from the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA), give an update regarding the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). She said 112,000+ miles of fiber were deployed under this program. ICN participated in BTOP, with physical work completed June 30, 2013. Vicki Wallis co-hosted a roundtable discussion with Anne Neville on Extending the Reach of Broadband. The discussion with other states revealed that almost every state has rural areas that are challenging to provide universal broadband service, and there are a number of different ways to address this challenge.

Other topics of regular interest were also discussed, such as cybersecurity, mobile security, technology innovation, project management, cloud services, managed services, Next Generation 911, and IT Service Management. Iowa is fairly unique in the ownership of state-wide fiber assets, as well as our statutory limitations.

The Midwestern Regional Seminar will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, April 13-16, hosted by the ICN. There will likely be a mix of panel discussions and presentations, predominantly by state members, on various topics taken from feedback from the recent national conference. As the host state, we'll have the opportunity to provide a lot of this content.

ICN is excited to host the conference, as Des Moines has changed a lot since NASTD last visited in 2005. More importantly, this is a great opportunity for Iowa to showcase the activities the State is pursuing in the world of technology.







## Employee Spotlight Greg Dorrell

Greg Dorrell has been with the ICN for 8 years after working for ICN as a contractor for 11 years. He is a Communication Technician II in the TAC (Technical Assistance Center) under ICN Engineering Bureau. He installs and maintains Voice/Data/Fiber optic cabling on the Capitol Complex and throughout Polk County. Greg enjoys his job working with a professional and extremely talented group. "It makes me want to continually improve to better myself to be a valued member," Greg says.

In his leisure time, Greg spends time with his son (13) who is involved with soccer and football and his daughter (9) who is in gymnastics and dance. His favorite colors have always been black and gold, as the Winterset Huskies sport black

and gold, and he grew up in a Hawkeye house full of great times and memories!

Greg also enjoys hunting, fishing, camping and occasionally playing Xbox with his son. He has never been a repeat vacation person. "We always try to go somewhere new. I enjoy spending time with the family the most. Coolest vacation so far was Jamaica or Australia," says Greg. Knowing this, it's no surprise that Greg's future aspiration is to retire and travel the country with his wife.

Family is always Greg's top priority, so it's no surprise his most memorable life experiences were seeing both of his children being born and watching them grow up to be great people. His volunteer activities include helping with his son and daughter's school sponsored activities.

If he could meet one person in history, Greg would like to meet Alexander Graham Bell, so they could talk about phone stuff of course!

## PBS LearningMedia Online Curriculum through Iowa Public Television

ICN is partnering with IPTV to bring you PBS LearningMedia (<http://iptv.pbslearningmedia.org/>), offering enhanced educational opportunities for educators and students in Iowa. Sign up for a [FREE account](#) and start using PBS LearningMedia today!

### Fostering Innovative Thinking with Steven Johnson | How We Got to Now

Audience: **Grades 1-13**

Watch as Steven Johnson, the host of the PBS series How We Got to Now, shares his advice for fostering innovative thinking: have diverse interests, follow your hunches, and don't be afraid to fail. The series tells the stories behind the ideas and inventions that made the modern world possible.

[Learn More...](#)

### The Fall of Berlin

Audience: **Grades 7-12**

Learn about the final events leading up to the fall of Berlin. As the Soviets launched their attack and the Nazi defenses failed, Hitler put his final plan in to action-suicide. The fall of the Reichstag followed, and with it World War II was close to over.

[Learn More...](#)

### PBS LearningMedia Contacts:

Angela Hiatt - [angela.hiatt@iptv.org](mailto:angela.hiatt@iptv.org) - (515) 725-9722

Abby Brown - [abby@iptv.org](mailto:abby@iptv.org) - (515) 725-9721

(800) 532-1290 - [iptv.pbslearningmedia.org](http://iptv.pbslearningmedia.org)

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